

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Chief Business Officers
Academic Senate Presidents

FROM: James E. Todd, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs

RE: Transition from Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) Codes to Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Codes

Purpose

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office is continuing to support the transition from the California-specific Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) to the federal Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) taxonomy. The need to move from TOP to CIP was first identified by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) in 1999 ([Resolution 21.01](#)); again in 2010 ([Resolution 09.02](#)); and in 2016 ([Resolution 09.12](#)). This memorandum provides updated information given to colleges beginning in October 2025 with [ESS 25-72](#), and ongoing guidance with [ESS 26-06](#), and [ESS 26-37](#). The information below updates and adds clarity, including the steps and timelines colleges should follow to review and assign CIP codes to all credit and noncredit instructional programs and courses. The Chancellor's Office acknowledges the complexity of this transition for colleges. We continue to learn from each other and remain committed to supporting colleges through this change.

The **curriculum transition timeline described in this memorandum extends from September 2026 through June 30, 2027**. During this period, colleges should review and assign CIP codes to their credit and noncredit instructional programs and courses using the guidance and resources provided below. The transition will align California Community Colleges with the national classification system used by colleges, universities, federal agencies, and other states and provide greater specificity in classifying instructional programs and courses. It will also strengthen the consistency and comparability of program and course data used for statewide reporting, pathway and workforce analysis, research, and accountability.

Key Implementation Dates

Colleges should be aware of the following dates:

- **September 4, 2026:** The [California Community Colleges Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\) Taxonomy](#) was published. You can search all 1800+ CIP codes and their approved California Community Colleges designation as CTE, non-CTE, both, or noncredit.
- **September 1, 2026–June 30, 2027:** Changing a CIP code will not trigger a substantial change.
- **October 9, 2026: The TOP-to-CIP interface tool in COCI will be published.** This gives the Tech Center the time they need to test the interface and ensure everything is operational.
- **October 9, 2026:** Re-formatted **CB09 (SAM code) definitions** will be published following review through the California Community Colleges Curriculum Committee (5C). The revisions improve clarity and format but do not change the substance of the definitions.
- **Beginning July 1, 2027:** The Chancellor’s Office will review CIP code submissions for alignment with the California Community Colleges CIP Taxonomy. CIP changes made after June 30, 2027, will be subject to substantial change requirements.
- **Following the summer 2028 reporting period:** Funding implications associated with changes from CTE TOP codes to non-CTE CIP codes will take effect. Colleges should use the transition period to identify and plan for potential impacts. Additional guidance will be provided.

COCI Revisions and Interface Tool

The Chancellor’s Office is developing an interface within the Chancellor’s Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI) to assist colleges in transitioning existing programs and courses from TOP to CIP. The interface is expected to be operational by **October 9, 2026**. Colleges are encouraged to wait for the interface before updating existing CIP codes in COCI.

New programs and courses, or necessary program and course changes, may be submitted before the interface is available. In these cases, colleges should determine the appropriate CIP code before submission. Colleges may use the [California Community Colleges Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\) Taxonomy](#) as a resource. Additionally, the “Resources” section on the [Chancellor’s Office TOP to CIP Transition website](#) includes links to the current TOP-to-CIP Crosswalk and a change log documenting any recent modifications.

COCI will also include secondary data fields for noncredit programs and courses to identify a corresponding credit CIP code, where applicable, supporting connections between noncredit instruction and related credit and career pathways.

Understanding the Transition from TOP to CIP

CIP is substantially more granular than TOP. The 2020 CIP taxonomy contains approximately 2,260 codes within 48 two-digit categories, compared with approximately 1,000 TOP codes within 24 categories.

The transition is therefore **not a one-to-one conversion**. Multiple CIP codes may map to a single TOP code. Colleges should use the TOP-to-CIP Crosswalk as a starting point, review the applicable CIP definitions, and select the code that most accurately represents the instructional content and purpose of each program or course.

Local Review of Programs and Courses. *All* credit *and* noncredit instructional **programs and courses** should be reviewed and assigned an appropriate CIP code. Because TOP codes are used throughout college systems and processes, implementation should be coordinated across curriculum, instruction, student services, academic senates, CTE, institutional research, information technology, counseling, admissions and records, and other affected areas.

Colleges should also identify where TOP codes are currently used in local databases, reports, websites, advising and articulation tools, planning processes, and other systems and prepare for the transition to CIP. Additional transition resources are available on the [TOP to CIP Transition website](#).

CTE Designation and Funding. CTE designation under CIP may differ from CTE designation under TOP. A program or course associated with a CTE TOP code should **not automatically be assigned a CTE CIP code**. Colleges must use the CTE designation identified in the [California Community Colleges CIP Taxonomy](#). For example, TOP 1305.00 combines Child Development and Early Childhood Education as CTE. CIP separates these areas: *Child Development is classified within Family and Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences and is non-CTE, while Early Childhood Education is classified within Education and is CTE.*

Funding associated with CTE classification will not change immediately. Colleges that transition from a CTE TOP code to a non-CTE CIP code will have through the **summer 2028 reporting period** to plan for potential funding impacts. Colleges should use the transition period to identify courses and programs whose CTE designation will change under CIP and evaluate potential fiscal, reporting, and programmatic implications. Additional guidance will be provided before implementation.

Substantial Change During the Transition. To allow colleges time to review and correct CIP assignments, the substantial change requirement for CIP code changes is temporarily suspended from **October 9, 2026 through June 30, 2027**. During this period:

- CIP code changes will not trigger substantial change.
- SAM code changes will not trigger substantial change.
- TOP code changes will continue to trigger substantial change.

Beginning July 1, 2027, the Chancellor's Office will review CIP assignments for consistency with the California Community Colleges CIP Taxonomy. Colleges will be notified if a correction is required. CIP changes made after June 30, 2027, will be subject to substantial-change requirements.

Because the TOP-to-CIP Crosswalk was developed with extensive field input, most TOP codes include multiple viable CIP options. Colleges should generally be able to identify an appropriate CIP for existing programs and courses. If none of the available CIP options appropriately align, colleges may request review at TOP2CIP@CCCCO.edu. Requests will be reviewed individually and may require additional time.

SAM Codes. SAM code definitions **have been** re-formatted for clarity and consistency and will be published to correspond with the COCI interface on October 9th. The substance and intent of the SAM definitions are not changing. Colleges are responsible for ensuring that SAM codes in COCI and MIS align. *COCI will no longer generate an error solely because the SAM codes in the two systems differ after October 9.*

CIP Assignment Guidance

The following guidance addresses common CIP assignment questions and should be used together with the California Community Colleges CIP Taxonomy, TOP-to-CIP Crosswalk, and applicable CIP definitions.

General CIP Assignment Principles

- **Use the most specific appropriate CIP.** Review the applicable definitions in the NCES 2020 CIP Code List and select the code that best represents the instructional content and purpose of the program or course. Avoid CIP codes ending in "99" when a more specific code is appropriate.
- **Review programs and courses individually.** Do not assume that all courses or programs previously assigned to the same TOP code should receive the same CIP code. For programs, colleges will find a dropdown list of CIP codes that appropriately map to specific TOP codes. For courses, colleges should follow the crosswalk mapping as closely as possible or review CIP codes within the same two- or four-digit family as the program CIP.
- **Use primary instructional content for interdisciplinary curriculum.** When a program or course spans multiple disciplines, select the CIP that best represents its primary

instructional content and purpose. A CTE program, for example, may appropriately include one or more non-CTE courses.

- **Maintain consistency across systems.** Colleges remain responsible for ensuring that CIP, SAM, and related data are accurate and consistent across COCI, MIS, and local systems.
- **Continue to report TOP codes in MIS.** Colleges are responsible for reporting both TOP and CIP codes through the summer 2028 reporting period. After that period, MIS will move to only requiring CIP codes.
- **ADT and CCN CIP code changes will be made by the Tech Center** for all colleges. Do not resubmit codes for these.

CTE and Work Experience

- **Review CTE classifications carefully.** CTE status under CIP may differ from CTE status under TOP. Colleges should use the designation contained in the California Community Colleges CIP Taxonomy and begin planning for potential funding or programmatic implications.
- **Determine the local designation for CIP codes identified as “both” or “either/or.”** These CIP codes meet both CTE and non-CTE criteria. Each college should determine whether the applicable course or program will be designated CTE or non-CTE and ensure that related local requirements and documentation are addressed (e.g., advisory committees, labor market data utilization, etc.). The selected designation will place the course or program within the college’s CTE or non-CTE portfolio and may have associated funding implications.
- **Connect CTE Work Experience to the program of study.** CTE Work Experience courses should use the CIP code of the associated program, along with the appropriate CB10 designation. For example, a Masonry program and its related Masonry Work Experience course would both use CIP 46.0101, with the Work Experience course also carrying the appropriate CB10 designation. (For non-CTE Work Experience, colleges may use the CIP of the associated program or 24.0102 for General Work Experience.)

Noncredit CIP Assignments

All noncredit programs and courses must be assigned an applicable noncredit CIP code. Colleges should determine the appropriate assignment based on the instructional purpose of the program or course, its CDCP eligibility, and, where applicable, whether the curriculum is CTE.

- **Noncredit CIP assignment.** All noncredit programs and courses must be assigned an applicable noncredit CIP within 32.xxxx-37.xxxx or 53.xxxx.
- **CDCP-eligible curriculum.** CDCP-eligible programs and courses should be assigned consistent with the applicable CDCP category: ESL, Short-Term Vocational, Workforce Preparation, or Elementary and Secondary Basic Skills.

- **CTE noncredit curriculum.** Noncredit curriculum determined to be CTE should be assigned 32.0111 (Short-Term Vocational) or 32.0107 (Workforce Preparation), as appropriate. Most skills-based CTE noncredit programs and courses should be assigned 32.0111 when consistent with their instructional purpose.
- **SAM codes.** SAM codes should not be used as the primary basis for determining whether a noncredit program or course is CTE or non-CTE. Colleges should first determine the appropriate CIP classification and then ensure that the associated SAM code is consistent with that determination.
- **Secondary CIP Assignment.** Because a required noncredit CIP may not identify the specific occupational or disciplinary subject matter of a program or course, the secondary CIP field in COCI may be used to identify a corresponding credit instructional area. For example, a Short-Term Vocational program would retain 32.0111 as its primary noncredit CIP while the secondary CIP could identify the related occupational field, where applicable.
- **Supervised Tutoring.** The single approved CIP code for supervised tutoring is 32.0101.
- **Vocational ESL (VESL).** Use the noncredit ESL CIP (32.0109) plus the associated program CIP code in the secondary data cell.

Special Curriculum Considerations

- **Guidance Courses.** CIP does not include a direct equivalent to California's TOP classification for Guidance programs. Individual courses should be assigned based on their instructional purpose as follows:

Type of Guidance Course	CIP Code
First Year Experience	30.0000
Academic Guidance/Education Planning	24.0102
Career Guidance	13.1102
Study Skills/Other Guidance	13.1199

- **ADTs and Common Course Numbering.** Associate Degree for Transfer (ADTs) and Common Course Numbering courses will use systemwide CIP assignments determined by the Chancellor's Office. The list of those assignments has been shared separately. Any CIP code changes will be made centrally. Colleges should *not* resubmit new CIP codes individually.
- **Verification of Existing CIP Assignments.** The Chancellor's Office will provide a process for colleges to verify certain existing CIP assignments as appropriate without resubmitting them. Colleges remain responsible for carefully reviewing each CIP assignment.

Resources and Implementation Support

The Chancellor's Office will continue to provide implementation guidance and technical assistance throughout the transition period. Colleges will be notified when the COCI interface becomes available and when additional guidance related to reporting and funding implications is issued. Resources include:

- [TOP to CIP Transition Website](#)
- [National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\) 2020 CIP Code List](#)
- [Noncredit TOP to CIP Mapping](#)
- [California Community College Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\) Taxonomy \(Searchable\)](#)

Questions regarding the TOP to CIP transition may be directed to TOP2CIP@CCCCO.edu.

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